

VZCZCXRO5509
PP RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK
DE RUEHGB #2516/01 2110708
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 300708Z JUL 07
FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2519
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 002516

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/29/2017

TAGS: [IR](#) [IZ](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#)

SUBJECT: TALABANI DISCUSSES IRAN TALKS, TAWAFUQ WITHDRAWAL

Classified By: Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Iraqi President Jalal Talabani told the Ambassador July 25 that Iran was very positive about the talks held the previous day with the Ambassador. Talabani had little to say on the prospect of Tawafuq withdrawing from the government, but he thought that they should handle their concerns with the Prime Minister in private. Talabani planned to go to Kurdistan later that day to sign a charter of cooperation between the KDP and PUK. He hoped that Barzani would accompany him back to Baghdad soon after. Talabani said ISCI leader Abdelaziz Hakim looked very well when he saw him on July 24. He also met with the CoR Human Rights Committee and discussed delaying Article 140. END SUMMARY.

U.S.-Iran Talks

¶2. (C) Talabani claimed that the Iranians had many "positive things" to say about their talks with the Ambassador on July 24. The Iranians said it was a frank, encouraging meeting, and they understood that the U.S. was serious. They were ready to fight terrorism and cooperate against Al Qaeda in Iraq. Talabani said he spoke by phone with IRGC Quds Force commander Qasim Soleimani who also thought the talks had gone well and had beseeched Talabani to "help both sides" in this interaction. According to Talabani, Soleimani stated that he would not interfere in the internal affairs of friends. Talabani noted that the Iranians also pledged to support the Maliki government.

¶3. (C) Talabani said Hashimi was present when the Iranians visited him. He noted that the Iranians acted positively toward Hashimi. The Iranians discussed national unity, and Hashimi gave them ideas for correcting their mistakes, according to Talabani. The Iranians invited Hashimi to open an office of the Iraqi Islamic Party in Tehran, Talabani said.

Tawafuq Withdrawal

¶4. (C) The Ambassador raised Tawafuq's announcement of their intention to withdraw from the GOI. He said once they take such a step it is difficult to step back. He noted that the PM had not responded positively to this development. Talabani wondered if Tawafuq would follow through with their withdrawal. He stated that he had urged them not to make harsh and difficult demands and to postpone their withdrawal for a week. According to Talabani, Tawafuq claimed they needed to show the PM their seriousness. Talabani thought that explaining this to the PM in private would be a better course of action than publicly showing their hand. Meghan O'Sullivan asked if they had informed the PM of their intention to withdraw, Talabani responded that he did not know. O'Sullivan thought the PM might be surprised by this development.

¶5. (C) Talabani thought that Tawafuq leader Adnan Dulaymi had aspirations to replace Speaker of the Council of Representatives (CoR) Mahmoud Mashadani, and Dulaymi would not let the withdrawal happen (Note: Tawafuq announced that it would withdraw from the government but not the parliament. End note.) Dulaymi also told Talabani that he would not put himself up as a candidate for Speaker without Talabani's support. Talabani said that the IIP was satisfied with the agreements reached with Barzani when they visited him last week. The IIP agreed to sign a tripartite agreement with the PUK and the KDP.

¶6. (C) Talabani said the Sunnis were upset because the PM had asked the Ministry of Defense to investigate the IIP. He suggested that the PM give the IIP an indirect apology for Iraqi Security Forces' (ISF) activities near the IIP's headquarters. (Note: This is a reference to Tawafuq complaints that an ISF commander was harassing people near the IIP HQ. End Note.)

¶7. (C) Talabani noted that the PM acted very poorly in the last 3 1 meeting. In response to a question from Hashimi, the PM said he would never accept anyone interfering in security affairs. Before he lashed out, the meeting had gone well, Talabani said. They had agreed on an agenda and on the designated advisors for the planned leadership meeting working group.

PUK-KDP Charter, Barzani's Return to Baghdad

¶8. (C) Talabani said that he would go to Kurdistan later

BAGHDAD 00002516 002 OF 002

that day to sign a charter of cooperation with Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) President Masood Barzani. Barzani would return with him or shortly thereafter. Asked if this was the appropriate time to bring down Barzani, Talabani said they need him here to speak to Hashimi. He and Barzani would try to discuss the resignation with Hashimi. He also thought Barzani confidante Rowsch Shaways would come to Baghdad on July 25 or 26 to participate in the preparatory meetings for the leadership meeting.

Hakim's Health Much Improved

¶9. (C) Talabani said he visited ISCI leader Abdelaziz Hakim on July 24 and asked him to talk to the PM about the Tawafuq withdrawal. He said Hakim looked very well and that he was told the cancer had disappeared. They allegedly sent the x-rays to the clinic in Houston where Hakim initially received treatment. Doctors there were shocked at the results, according to Talabani.

CoR Human Rights Committee

¶10. (C) Talabani said he had met yesterday with the CoR Human Rights Committee. Committee members had told him that they had been trying to meet with the Minister of Interior for 3-4 weeks to discuss prisons. The Ambassador suggested that they summon the Interior Minister to the CoR. Talabani noted that he was classmates with the judiciary chief, and Talabani had convinced the chief to boost his cadre of investigators by 8-25 committees, but they needed good officers to fill the slots which they were calling on the MOI to help fill.

Delaying Article 140

¶11. (C) Talabani opined, as his recently resigned chief of staff Kamran Karadaghi told Poloffs in June, that the Article 140 process will naturally be postponed if they just let it play out. Normalization will not be finished by December 31 and, as such, the referendum will have to slip past the deadline. In contrast to what the Ambassador heard from Article 140 committee members in Kurkuk on July 18, Talabani said that no one needs the approval of the MOI to sell their home and move. Talabani also noted that Hashimi was insisting too much on strengthening the powers given to the Presidency in the constitution.

CROCKER